

“Practice makes perfect,” this is phrase that every student, including myself, has heard countless times. Indeed, practice does make perfect and it is crucial that I keep up with my regular practice as I seek perfection in my various fields of study and particularly, music. As a budding musician, I believe in the power of constant and conscientious practising. I believe that it will lead me to my final goal, perfection, or as close s I can possibly get to it.

But what exactly is perfection? Well, in my own definition, perfection is the ability to play with a rich tone, overcome technical difficulties and to emote appropriately as if the French horn was all but an extension of one’s body. I am still miles away from this final goal but this was how it all started.

Two years ago, I decided to join the school concert band as I was interested in music and the performing arts. I was given the opportunity to try many foreign instruments that I have never heard of and this included the French horn which I eventually picked up.

When I first began playing, I faced many problems, my weak rhythmic sense being one of them. I had tough time trying to play on beat as I could not feel the tempo or the subdivisions well enough to play in time. Last year, we had to play a jazz piece for a competition and my fourth horn score had its share of quick and intricate rhythmic patterns that I was to play in unison with the others in my section.

Rhythm had always been my Achilles” heel and I was determined to change this. Therefore, while everyone else plugged their earphones into their iPods and sang along with Lady Gaga, I plugged mine into an electronic metronome and hummed rhythmic patterns to myself. Starting slow, I increased the tempo until it was on par with the conductor’s and eventually, I went faster- just in case she decides to speed up.

The competition went well and even though the results were disappointing, I could play all the rhythmic passages in perfect unison with the others in my section.

Even though I am still having some problems with my rhythm, I have learnt how to improve and the only way is to practise very hard to get it exactly right. Occasionally, I go back to my fundamental etudes to strengthen my foundation and to help myself progress further.

This year, as I participate in the Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) Central Judging, I am faced with other problems such as range, volume and rapid passages.

These, I believe can be overcome with long practice hours and dedication. Hopefully, at the end of this journey, our band would play beautifully and cry tears of joy as the results are announced.

“Practice makes perfect”, I truly believe in this statement. This year’s SYF Central Judging is merely a step towards my ultimate goal of perfection. My dream is to take this path as far as my potential carries me and when I achieve that, I would be truly contented.